

Good afternoon,

We've finished the March 11, 2014 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecasts update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of March 11, 2014 and are posted at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iudir?s=b120up>.

Forecast Summary:

Considering the rivers forecasted in the B120 update, the projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 11 percent on the Tule River to 54 percent for the Inflow to Shasta Lake. On average, the forecasts have risen less than one percent compared to March 1. For all rivers south of the Stanislaus, the forecast remained the same or dropped 1 or 2 percent. North of the Tuolumne, all forecasts rose from 1 to 3 percent.

Runoff:

Thanks to precipitation events that affected primarily the northern range, the flows in March have been above 85 percent of average north of the Cosumnes River. All other rivers in the forecast are flowing at a rate less than 65 percent of average. More significantly, south of the Tuolumne River, flow rates are equal to or less than 35 percent of average. The American River is flowing at a rate greater than 100 percent of average for March.

Precipitation:

As of March 11, the Northern Sierra 8-Station index has recorded 5.7 inches of precipitation in March which is more than twice the normal accumulation (2.3 inches) for that period. The Water Year (WY) total (20.9 inches), however, is only 56% of average. Both January and December were below 15 percent of average.

As of March 11, the San Joaquin 5-Station index gained 2.8 inches compared to a normal increase of 2.1 inches for the first 11 days of March. So, the accumulation in March has been about 133 percent of normal. The WY total (13.2 inches) is only 44% of average.

Snowpack:

As of March 11, 2014, the snow sensor data indicates that the Northern Sierra, Central Sierra, and Southern Sierra snowpack are 20, 35, and 33 percent of their season-to-date averages, respectively. The statewide snowpack, as measured by snow sensors, as of March 11 was 31 percent of average to date and 29 percent of the April 1 average. The statewide snow water content increased about ½ inch to 8.2 inches from March 1.

Weather and Climate Outlook:

The forecast for the next 6 days shows no precipitation statewide. During this period, freezing elevations are expected to vary between 9,000 and 12,500 feet over the Sierra Nevada as a small heat wave comes through the state.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) one-month outlook for March, updated February 28, suggests increased chances of above normal temperatures for all of the state. The same outlook predicts increased chances of above normal precipitation in the Colorado River region and equal chances of above or below normal precipitation elsewhere in the State.

The CPC's three-month outlook (March-May), updated February 20, strongly suggests increased chances of above normal temperatures for all of California. The same outlook predicts increased chances of below normal precipitation over all of the state except over the rivers flowing into Lake Shasta where equal chances of above and below normal precipitation exist.

El Nino/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are currently neutral. ENSO-neutral conditions are expected to persist through the Northern Hemisphere Spring 2014, with about a 50% chance of El Niño developing during the summer or fall.

Next Update:

The next Bulletin 120 Update for conditions on March 18, 2014 will be available on March 20, 2014.

If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff. We are happy to help.